

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

2-1786

COUNTRY South Vietnam

REPORT NO. C-311/07913-67

SUBJECT Viet Cong Prison System in
Binh Long Province

DATE DISTR 10 July 1967

NO. PAGES 2

REFERENCES RD

DATE OF INFO. 30 December 1965-17 April 1967

PLACE & Vietnam, Bien Hoa

DATE ACQ. (29 June 1967)

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SOURCE

1. Summary: During the period 30 December 1965-17 April 1967, the Viet Cong (VC) in Binh Long Province had five prison camps known as B5, B4, B3, B2 and B1. The first camp, B5, appeared to be a holding area where a prisoner's disposition was decided. In camps B4 and B3, interrogations were conducted. At B2, the final decision was made as to whether a prisoner was to be executed or released. A prisoner slated for release was then moved to B1, where he underwent daily indoctrination and had to sign a statement that he would keep secret everything he had seen. All five camps were composed of thatched huts and were well guarded. There was no indication that any of the five camps held American prisoners.
2. During the period 30 December 1965 - 17 April 1967, the Viet Cong (VC) in Binh Long Province appeared to have a system of handling prisoners of all categories that involved the use of five successive detention camps designated B5, B4, B3, B2 and B1. Each camp served a specific function and prisoners were moved from one camp to the next one in accordance with what appeared to be a standardized system. The specific functions of the individual camps were the following:

STATE # | DIA | ARMY | NAVY | AIR | NSA | AID |
JUSPAO/USMACV/USARV/NAVFORV/7AF/525MIG/COMUSMACV/DISTSO/OSI/CINCPAC/PACAF/PACFLT/ARPAC/1
(Note: Field distribution indicated by "e")

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APPROVED FOR RELEASE

Date 20 Aug 67

DIA #91

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a. The first camp into which a prisoner was introduced was Camp B5, located 15 kilometers southwest of Tay Ninh City (exact location unknown). The initial decision concerning the prisoner's disposition probably was taken here. After an undetermined period of time, the prisoner would be transferred to Camp B4. 1115/10605
(S-279)
p 351019

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b. At Camp B4, the prisoner was interrogated frequently, usually about the same subjects, namely, personal background, American and Vietnamese intelligence services worked for, etc. Prisoners were sometimes tortured and were forced to dig trenches and foxholes around the prison compound. The camp was located at approximately XT 905967 and consisted of six thatched houses, each 5 x 10 meters in size and housing 46 prisoners, guarded by about 70 VC. The prisoners were mainly Montagnards, Cambodians and Vietnamese. 114300N
1054455E
1332 III NC48

S-318
c. At Camp B3, located at approximately XU 887034, prisoners underwent further interrogation. The camp consisted of nine thatched houses and was the strongest of the five in terms of defensive positions. Three trails were used to reach B3: one from Loi Minh Hamlet, one from Tra Thanh Village, and the third from the Song Be River, which forms the natural boundary between Government of Vietnam Phuoc Long and Binh Long Provinces. All other trails leading to B3 were mined and/or trapped with spike pits. Normally, about 90 VC were stationed permanently at the camp, but, on occasion, there were as many as 800. One prisoner succeeded in escaping from B3 but was shortly recaptured and killed by the VC. 1147N
10649E
6332 II NC48

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d. Camp B2 was located at XU 906107 and was where a prisoner's final fate was decided, that is, whether he was to be released or executed. Before any prisoner was executed, his crimes were announced publicly to the other prisoners. Three Vietnamese prisoners were executed in October 1966, one of them a former candidate for the National Assembly. At B2, all prisoners were kept in their cells at all times; like Camps B4 and B3, B2 held approximately 46 prisoners. The permanent guard force was composed of between 150 and 200 Montagnards. 1147N
10649E
6332 II NC48

S-320
e. If it was decided to free a prisoner, he was then transferred to Camp B1, located at XU 980111. He remained here for an indeterminate time, during which he was subjected to daily indoctrination and was finally forced to write a declaration stating that he would keep secret after his release everything he had seen. As the final step, the prisoner was led to Tra Thanh Village, where he was set free. At B1, 32 prisoners were confined in 26 thatched houses. An estimated 150 VC were in the camp. On occasion the camp served as a temporary base for regular units moving through the area. Once, about 1,500 VC troops camped there for the night. PHUOC BINH Prov
1147N
10649E
6332 II NC48

Comment: It cannot be determined from Source's comments if this procedure was standard for handling all VC prisoners or if Source's experiences were unique. Source was also unable to identify the particular point at which each prisoner is introduced into this VC penal system. At no time during the 17 months he spent in the five camps described did he see any American prisoners.